

THE SPIRITUAL ISSUES OF THE WAR

This Bulletin is published for readers at home and abroad by the Religions Division of the Ministry of Information, London, to provide information concerning the British churches in wartime, and to elucidate the spiritual issues at stake in the war.

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DUTCH CHURCH UNSHAKEN

The Dutch Reformed Church remains unshaken in its opposition to the Nazi regime and unintimidated by German threats and persecution.

The following is the text of the Declaration it made on May 16th, 1943, once again courageously read out from the pulpits:—

“The sight of our suffering people fills our hearts with burning pain.

“The General Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church therefore calls for communal prayer.

“Numberless people are in the deepest distress through the measures announced since April. Misery among the relatives of the victims, the anxiety and tension which we have had to bear since the beginning of May, the grief of the families whose student sons have been deported, or whose fathers, sons and brothers will shortly be called up for unwilling service, have deadened our souls.

“On every one of us presses heavily the burden of what we feel as crying injustice. However much we exert ourselves to assist each other in this great misery, yet we feel our impotence, and our lack of justice. As a Church, we must, in all the distress in us and around us, pray, maybe learn again to pray. In this prayer we must confess our sins; our sins as a people, and as a Church. But we also beseech Him who is the almighty and just, mercy-bringing and merciful, who has pity on us in His Court, who was and is, and always will be, our Saviour, that we may have part in the Holy Ghost which may fill our hearts with unspoken sighs. Let us not stop calling on Him who is Father of Jesus, who is willing to give us everything with Him, who punishes in order to bless, takes in order to give, kills in order to revive. We shall not have peace if we do not see the future in

Him who says: ‘Fear none of these things which thou shalt suffer: . . . be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.’—Rev. 2: 10.”

SLOVAK CATHOLIC PASTORAL LETTER

A Special Correspondent writes in the *Courrier de Genève* (30-5-43):

“A pastoral letter signed by seven Catholic bishops in Slovakia was read in all churches in Slovakia on March 21st. It deals with the question in the same sense as the Protestant bishops’ protest published in September, 1942. The text of the protest says, *inter alia*:—

“‘The State ought to defend the principles of natural law and ought itself be guided by these same principles. We are glad to note that the constitution of the State, on which all our legislation is based, conforms to natural law in setting down the fact that a person cannot be punished for a breach of the law, unless the guilt of that person has been established by law or by a legal ruling. Our Saviour defended the inviolability of this natural law. The ever-beautiful parable of the Good Samaritan contains a very profound truth in it—that our attitude to men should not be influenced by their tongue, nor by their allegiance to some State, nation or race. The principles laid down by natural law must never be broken, because sooner or later such a violation of the natural law would undermine the foundations of social order and prosperity.

“‘Conscious of our responsibility before God, and conscious also of our responsibility to defend the principles of natural law and of divine revelation, we resolutely lift up our voice in protest against the way in which men of our faith as well as other

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members of our nation are punished *en masse* without a previous and thorough examination. This matter concerns every individual. . . .

"In our declaration, published in the *Katolické Noviny* (26-4-42), we clearly expressed our point of view on the subject of the baptism of Jews. We have allowed and we shall continue to allow the baptising of all those who have proved their faith by Holy Communion and who practise the rites required by the Church.

"We demand that *equal civil rights and State protection shall be accorded to every member of the State without distinction of origin or nationality*, and even more strongly we demand the recognition of all Christian rights for anyone who has received the sacrament of baptism. Such are the principles which we have defended many times. We find ourselves forced to declare them again at the moment when the public learns that new measures have been issued which are a contradiction of these principles. We will not have peace until justice reigns, for "Peace is the result of justice.""

INCIDENTS IN NORWEGIAN CHURCH CONFLICT

A Quisling Sermon

A Norwegian Quisling paper (*Vestlandske Tidende*) of May 24th gave the following account of a Quisling service in Arendal:—

"On the morning of May 23rd, Kirkegata and the square in front of Trinity Church was crowded with people waiting for something to happen. Pastor Ring of Tromsøy had been asked to preach in Arendal to give the population an opportunity of hearing the Word of God clean and pure and not mixed with the usual politics and hatred. We knew that those who attended sermons only to be strengthened in their firm belief in the dead political system would not be found among Ring's congregation, but we hoped the true Christians would come. *Admittedly very few attended the sermon*, but we are convinced that Heaven rejoiced more over the few inside the church than the crowd demonstrating outside at the instigation of a clergyman and a parish clerk.

"Pastor Loeken and his neighbour, the shipowner Morland, acted as leaders, but the police resolutely held them back from the church door when they attempted to enter and take the pulpit themselves. The whole crowd then went elsewhere to continue its politics, while in Trinity Church

God's Word was preached in all its purity. We hate nobody, but we feel entitled to ask how long the population of Arendal must listen to a Dean who not only has bad councillors, but also cannot preach God's Word without irrelevance."

This account provides a good example of one of the lines of attack adopted by the Quisling papers. Because the faithful Church followers do not sit down under the attempted Nazification of religion and education, they are accused of interference in politics.

This incident had a sequel, which was reported in the same paper the following day. It wrote: "After the recent incident in front of Trinity Church, Arendal, the Parish Council found that Dean Loeken has repeatedly behaved contrary to the letter from the Church Department of March 17th, 1943. The Council, therefore, decided to deprive Dean Loeken of his right to use the church until further notice.

"Loeken has refused to accept the decision of the authorities, and the Chairman of the Parish Council, O. H. Unander, has referred the matter to the bishop, requesting the immediate dismissal of Loeken and the appointment of a loyal clergyman."

Here again the report is written so that it sounds perfectly right and proper. But it is necessary to remember who these various persons are. The Parish Council mentioned is clearly the one set up by an order of the Church Department, consisting of a few of the local Quislings. The bishop in question is the Quisling bishop.

Boycott of Quisling Clergy

The Stockholm paper, *Svenska Morgonbladet*, reported on May 31st that "The NS Bishop, Lars Froeyland wrote to a party comrade, Pastor Creutz of Fagerborg Parish in Oslo, emphasising that the loyal clergy in Oslo are being boycotted as regards marriages, burials, etc. Froeyland has now taken steps to prevent such boycott, and has ordered the Oslo Church Council to inform all undertakers that they may not ask a certain clergyman to read a burial service, even if the family wants him. All burials must be reported to the local registry office which will decide the question of the clergyman."

The same number of the paper also published the news that the authorities are now preparing to increase the powers of the few NS clergymen at the expense of the large majority of the Norwegian clergy who support the Temporary Church Leadership. It added that the NS in Telemark

has suggested a sweeping amalgamation of parishes. "The Quisling-appointed pastor Harald Fosse of Kopervik has proposed to the NS Bishop Kvasnes of Stavanger that all church functions should be performed by the local clergyman under force of law. At present the population boycott NS pastors by summoning a pastor from a neighboring district or by travelling there for marriages and burials. Fosse considers that this should be forbidden, and Kvasnes supports him."

Even Quisling Bishops worried about Anti-Christian Teaching

The length to which anti-Christian teaching is being taken in Norway is shown by a Swedish report in *Social Demokraten*, which writes: "The NS Bishop Dagfin Zwilgmeyer of Hamar has made serious representations about the NS Youth Service to Skancke, the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs, and to the leader of the NSUF (NS Youth Organisation), Axel Stang, saying that he requested NS representatives in Hedmark County to carry through the Youth Service *without* attacks on the Church and Christian belief. This resulted in the representatives receiving a strong reprimand from the NS national authorities.

"Zwilgmeyer emphasises that if the national authorities intend to follow this course, then the Youth Service will be an impossibility throughout the county. A clear declaration must be given that nothing against the doctrine and faith of the Church will be said or taught in the Youth Service. If the authorities cannot give this promise, church work, the Youth Service and the Party will inevitably experience the most serious difficulties."

Hallesby in Germany?

Aftonbladet, a Stockholm paper, publishes an unconfirmed report from Oslo saying that Professor Hallesby and Pastor Hope have been sent to Germany en route for an unnamed concentration camp.

A broadcast from Sweden states that Bishop Krohn-Hansen (one of the rightful bishops.—ED.), together with his wife, has been banished from Troms Fylke and directed to live on Helgoen Island in Lake Mjoesa. They must report to the police once a fortnight.

CHINESE BISHOP'S COMMENTS ON THE WAR

The Right Rev. C. T. Song, Bishop of Western Szechwan, one of the most pro-

found thinkers among the leaders of the Chinese Church, writes as follows on the war in the *Church Missionary Society Outlook* for June, 1943:—

"We are now faced with Satanic power, threatening to overthrow us and our civilisation. Our enemies are trying their best to change the truth "Right is might" into "Might is right." Your country and our country, your people and our people are joining hands together to fight our common enemy in order to save this world from perdition. The struggle is long, hot and painful, but it is well worth while. In spite of the awful pain and bleeding, our Government and people are maintaining our cause with cheerfulness. I am sure that your Government and people are doing the same. For we are fighting not only for ourselves and our own nations, but for the justice, righteousness, democracy and peace of the whole world. So we feel sure that final victory belongs to us. The clouds will be scattered, and the sun will come out eventually.

"In order to bring out a new world order from this present chaos, one of the most vital and important movements we must push is religious. We need to convert, clarify, and enrich the religious ideas and ideals of our people. East and west are sharing a good many things to-day. We are sharing our political and economic ideas with each other. We are sharing tremendously in the material line, and permit me to say that some of this sharing is not very healthful. This is indeed a great sharing age. But we need to share more fundamentally, that is, the religious ideas and ideals which we have held dear for generations."

FRENCH CHRISTIANS AND THE NEW ORDER

In the French Protestant paper, *Evangile et Liberté*, for March 24th Pastor Louis Dumas contributes an article from the Protestant point of view on the debate opened by the Quisling Leader Marcel Déat on "The Place of the Church in the New Order." Déat had posed the question: "Will the Church put itself inside or outside the coming New Order?"

Monsieur Dumas writes as follows: "We Protestants know very well that the world after the war will not be the same as that which preceded it. A valuable revelation is given in the midst of the anguish and the terror, in the midst of blood and tears, and as we do not know where this is leading us we pray that God

himself will give it a direction in conformity with His law.

"The Church must not find itself outside the New Order, whatever it is. She herself must be renewed in one sense, but must remain faithful to her own nature, to her mission and to the eternal commandments of her Leader.

"She will have to give herself without doubt to new tasks, undertaken by new methods. But as Jesus Christ is the same 'yesterday, to-day and forever,' the task of the Church in its essentials will always be the same—a duty of love towards men who are the creatures of God.

"The Church will never be able to forget the infinite value which Jesus the Good Shepherd attaches to each individual sheep. He leaves the flock (as He taught in the parable) to search for the one who is lost. Therefore the value of the human personality according to the Gospel must be laid down as an axiom.

"There are not two separate points of view for the Church on this matter—one Catholic and one Protestant. There is only one, and that is the Christian point of view. In spite of doctrinal or ecclesiastical differences, the existence of the Christian front must be clearly understood in order that the very foundations of Christianity may be preserved. God be praised we are on the way to making it a reality."

Monsieur Dumas continues: "I am not under suspicion of hostility to ideas of authority, toil and social coherence or of national and international community. Protestantism, generally speaking, is not hostile to these ideas." The paper goes on to say that it is obliged, like its Catholic contemporaries, to ask what these words mean, and to make such reservations as are necessary to safeguard the common Christian inheritance.

RELIGION AND LIFE

Two items of news in the past week throw light on the way in which new links are being formed in Britain between "religion" and "life."

Thirteen hundred people attended a meeting at Manchester on June 4th arranged by Manchester business men who desire to bring commerce and business under the direct control of Christian principles. A speech was made by Mr. J. S. Winant, the American Ambassador, and the following resolution was adopted:—

"That the fundamental principle of Christianity should be acknowledged afresh by the nation as the mainspring of public and private actions and as the

touchstone by which individuals and the country shall judge one policy against another."

Another interesting feature is the development of the movement for appointing chaplains to factories. According to the *Glasgow Herald*, June 3rd, 1943, the Rev. W. Bodin, who was released from his charge in Dundee to organise Church of Scotland Industrial Chaplaincies, recently stated that ninety Ministers are now acting as chaplains in shipyards, war factories and industrial undertakings of all kinds all over Scotland.

Speaking of the response which the movement had received from managements and workers, he said: "The idea of chaplains in industry originated with the Rev. Robert Mackintosh, secretary of the Home Board of the Church. He himself, when he began making contacts, found both managements and workers a little shy at first, but on the whole they responded quickly.

"There are some anti-church people among them, and there are some people who are against religion, associating it with dope to keep them quiet. But after meeting with them and telling them frankly what the Church was trying to do, they seemed to be intrigued by the fact that the Church was ready to go out of its way to come to them.

"I think the scheme should go on after the war. The only limiting factor will be the Church's man-power. The Church of Scotland is doing this work as the national Church in Scotland. As the national Church, it belongs to the people, and the fact that so many of the people do not belong to it only increases its responsibility."

FOR INFORMATION

Two sets of mounted and captioned pictures have been prepared by the Ministry of Information for the purpose of lending to churches and other interested bodies. "The Church in War-Time Britain" consists of forty 15 in. by 12 in. photographs, and "Cross and Swastika in Europe" consists of twenty-five photographs of the same size. It is preferable that these two sets should be used together, as this provides a more complete picture. Applications may be made to Religions Division, Ministry of Information, Malet Street, London, W.C.1. As only a limited number of copies of these sets are available, applications will have to be taken in rotation. Applications for special events will be given special consideration.